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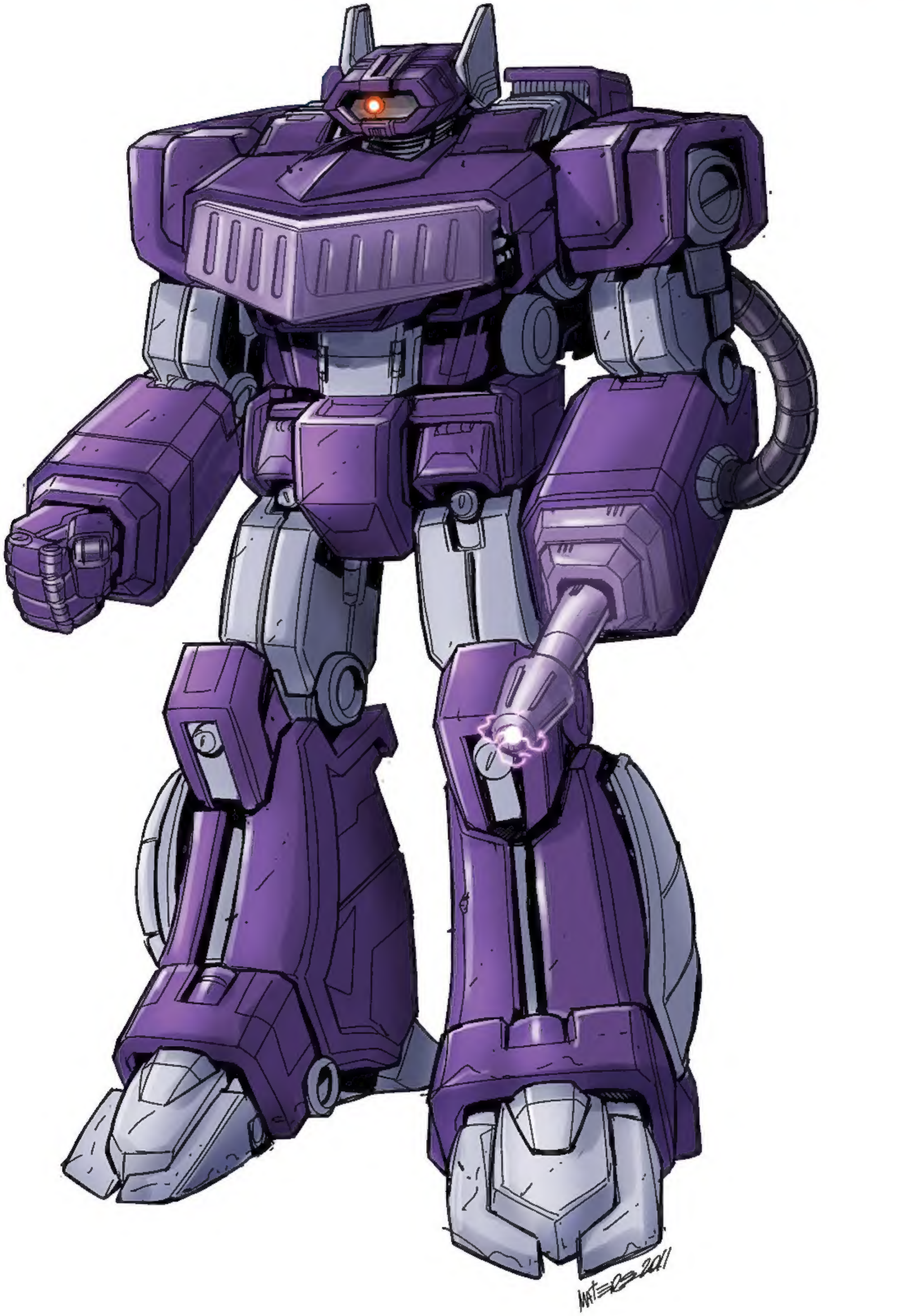

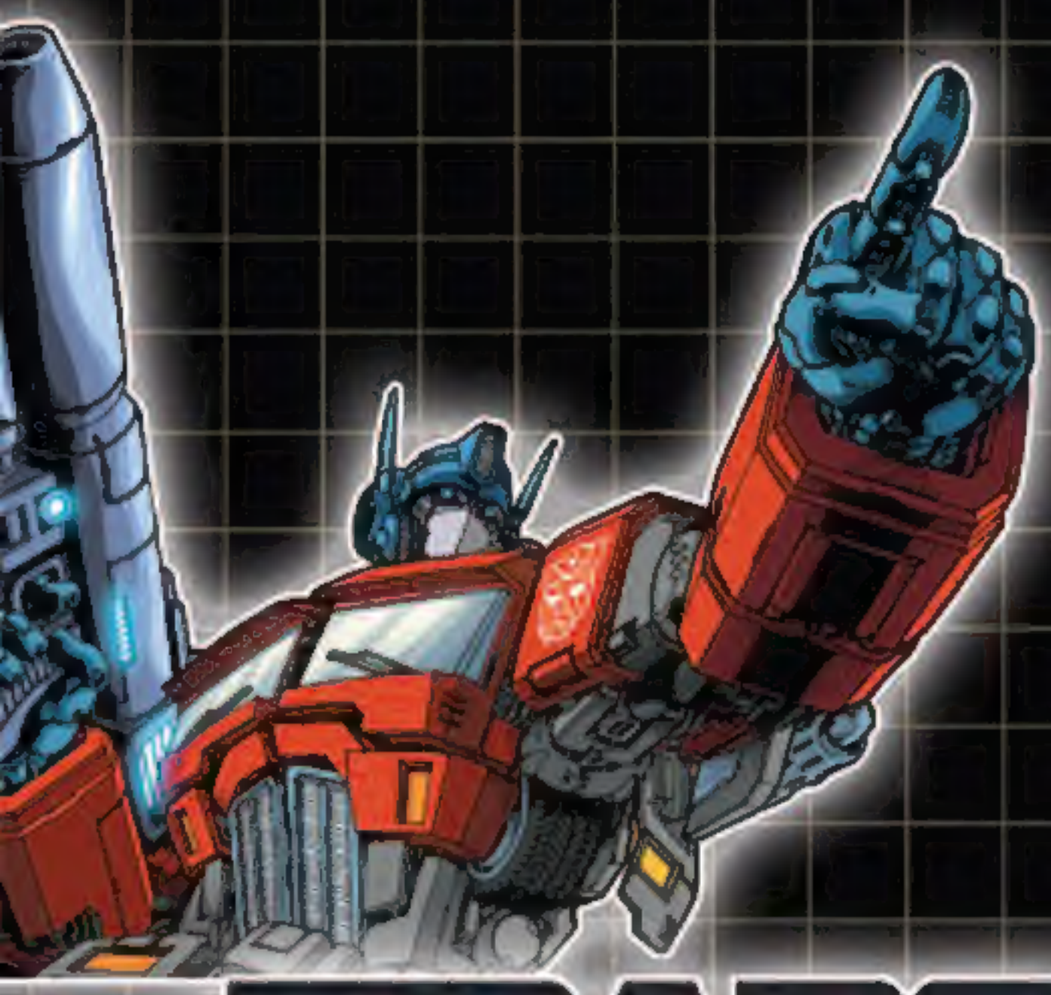

THE TRANSFORMERS

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STORY SO FAR:

Megatron's plan to destroy the Autobots is working. The Autobot and Skywatch headquarters has been attacked, Decepticon prisoners have been released, and several Autobots have been badly hurt. Also, by arming humans, manipulating the weak willed, and allowing fear and the media do the rest, Megatron has forced a conflict between civilians and Autobots, which resulted in Jazz killing a police officer in self-defense. Prime stalled Megatron briefly by nearly killing Soundwave, but it's only a matter of time before he strikes again...

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AND WITH YET ANOTHER CITY BEING ATTACKED TODAY, THE PRESIDENT IS UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE FOR SECURITY FAILURES, AND EVEN ALLEGATIONS THAT HE ALLOWED AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL TO SHARE INFORMATION AND WORK IN CONCERT WITH THE ALIENS.

SERGEANT JOHN POWELL WAS THE ONLY CASUALTY IN TODAY'S ALTERCATION BETWEEN THE CYBERTRONIANS AND ARMED CIVILIANS. AND THOUGH THE ATTACK WAS LIMITED, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW—

TURN THAT UP.

NO. I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THAT.

...WHERE'S... RATCHET?

OH COME ON. THAT'S JUST INSULTING.

RATCHET IS TENDING TO OTHER AUTOBOTS.

"WE HAVE A LOT OF WOUNDED TODAY."

YOU'RE GETTING THE BEST CARE WE CAN PROVIDE YOU. BUT YOU NEED TO PROVIDE *US* WITH SOMETHING. MEGATRON IS BACK.

I KNOW... ALREADY HEARD ONE SALES PITCH TODAY...

OH YES? WELL, HOW'S THIS FOR A PITCH: WE FIX YOU AND YOU TELL ME ALL THE PLACES YOU KNOW THAT HE WOULD TAKE AN INJURED DECEPTICON FOR REPAIRS.

IF NOT... YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER DAMAGED DECEPTICON IN OUR CUSTODY.

THOSE WERE SOME PRETTY HARSH WORDS FOR A GUY WHO DOESN'T EVEN HAVE ANY INFORMATION.

MEGATRON IS OUT THERE, AND SOUNDWAVE WON'T SLOW HIM DOWN FOR LONG. I WILL *NOT* ALLOW HIM TO GET AWAY WITH THIS.

I DON'T. I BLAME *MEGATRON.*

PRIME. I'M NOT GOING TO PRETEND THINGS AREN'T BAD. THINGS ARE VERY BAD. BUT YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF.

PRIME...

ULTRA MAGNUS. YOU SHOULD BE CONSERVING YOUR ENERGY.

I'M... SORRY...

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR, OLD FRIEND. YOU DID A FINE JOB. YOU MADE TOUGH CHOICES IN AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION, AND YOU SAVED LIVES.

NO... I'M SORRY BECAUSE I SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU SOONER...

...I PLACED A TRACKING CHIP ON SOUNDWAVE.

HUNTING DECEPTICONS DOWN... IT'S WHAT I DO.

WE CAN BE THERE IN 35 MINUTES, BUT BACK-UP WOULD TAKE ALMOST THAT LONG TO GEAR UP, AND WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT KIND OF RESISTANCE TO EXPECT.

THIS IS THE MOST SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY YOU HAVE AVAILABLE TO YOU?

WHAT, *THAT* STUFF? I WISH.

THAT'S ACTUALLY AN R&D PACKAGE I WAS GOING TO SUBMIT TO THE GENERALS FOR FUNDING. IT'S ALL THEORETICAL.

WE'LL BE GOING IN A LITTLE MORE LOW-TECH THAN ALL THAT.

HARPOON

RATCHET, IS JETFIRE CLEARED FOR DUTY? SPECIFICALLY, WOULD HE BE CAPABLE OF REACHING ORBIT?

YES. BUT I WOULD ***STRONGLY ADVISE*** HE NOT BE DEPLOYED IN COMBAT SO SOON.

HE WON'T SEE ANY COMBAT.

PRIME, NO. AFTER FAILING IN KOREA, YOU'LL NEED AIR SUPPORT AGAINST MEGATRON, AND I ***WANT ANOTHER SHOT—***

PUT YOURSELF IN ORBIT AND RENDEZVOUS WITH COSMOS.

—IF HE'S UP THERE, WHY CAN'T ***HE*** HANDLE THIS?

BECAUSE IT REQUIRES A SCIENTIST.

PRIME, PLEASE, THIS IS SUICIDE. YOU HAVE TO AT LEAST LET ME GO IN WITH YOU.

YOU ARE OFF OF ACTIVE DUTY UNTIL BUMBLEBEE IS HEALTHY ENOUGH TO DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT WITH YOU.

THAT'S THE FINAL WORD ON THIS CONVERSATION.

PRIME, I DON'T THINK YOU'RE ***THINKING CLEARLY***. YOU HAVE A TERRIBLE PLAN BASED AROUND SEVERAL UNKNOWN VARIABLES. YOU'RE GOING IN LIKE THIS BASED OUT OF ***ANGER***, AND THAT'S NEVER—

YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS. HOLD YOUR POSITION UNTIL EXTRACTION. THIS IS BETWEEN HIM AND ME.

THE DAMAGE IS ***EXTENSIVE***. MEGATRON, SOUNDWAVE IS IN ***STASIS-LOCK***.

WE'RE ONLY A FEW MINUTES OUT. JETFIRE, FROM MY MARK, HOW LONG UNTIL THE EVENT?

ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-TWO SECONDS, PRIME.

UNDERSTOOD.

YOU BROUGHT ME BACK FROM THE BRINK OF DEATH.

THAT WAS ***PLANNED***. WE SPECIFICALLY WENT TO A ROCK RICH IN THE RESOURCES I NEEDED. I USED EVERY OUNCE OF ORE-13 WE HAD TO REBUILD ***YOU***.

THESE HUMAN LABORATORIES ARE EMBARRASSINGLY UNDER-EQUIPPED. SALVATION DOESN'T JUST FALL FROM THE SKY.

JETFIRE.

MARK.

OPTIMUS PRIME!

WE CAN DO THIS IN HERE. BUT UNLESS YOU WANT ME TO SHOOT ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR MEN, I SAY WE STEP OUTSIDE.

I CAN *DEFINITELY* SAVE SOUNDWAVE, MEGATRON. BUT IT'S A DELICATE PROCEDURE, SO MAYBE IT'S BEST IF YOU LEFT.

FINE. TELL EVERYONE ELSE TO STAND DOWN. BUT THEY CAN COME AND WATCH IF THEY WISH. THIS WILL BE AN HISTORIC DAY.

IF YOU *INSIST* ON CARRYING THIS CHARADE TO ITS END.

WE CAN'T JUST KEEP FACING EACH OTHER LIKE THIS, MEGATRON. SOMETHING HAS TO CHANGE.

WE CERTAINLY CAN'T, PRIME. CLEARLY YOU'RE HERE WITH SOME DEATH WISH, BUT I REFUSE TO INDULGE YOU.

I'M SIMPLY GOING TO INCAPACITATE YOU AND LEAVE YOU FOR THE HUMAN AUTHORITIES. IT WILL BE SO MUCH MORE SATISFYING TO WATCH THE HUMANS OF THIS WORLD PICK YOU AND YOUR AUTOBOTS APART LIKE THE SWARM THEY ARE.

THEY ARE SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT, MEGATRON.

I SEE THAT WEAPON ON YOUR ARM. A RAIL-GUN?

YES. IT DOESN'T EVEN HAVE TO BE FULLY CHARGED TO DESTROY ONE OF THE ANTHILL CITIES ON THIS PLANET. BUT IT *IS* FULLY CHARGED.

IT'S THE FIRST UPGRADE I'VE SEEN YOU MAKE SINCE WE FIRST TANGLED. MYSELF, I'VE USED THIS SAME BLASTER FOR MILLENNIA.

BUT THESE HUMANS... THEY ADVANCE. THE WEAPONS THEY HAVE NOW OUTCLASS ONES THEY INVENTED HARDLY THREE YEARS AGO.

FOR INSTANCE...

...DO YOU KNOW WHAT A *KINETIC HARPOON* IS?

PRIME, WHAT IS THIS CHARADE?

YOU'VE PROVEN TO BE A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT SINCE I'VE RETURNED. NOW HOLD STILL SO I DON'T ACCIDENTALLY KILL YOU WHEN I BLOW YOUR LEGS OFF.

PRIME! COWARDICE *NOW*?! WHAT HAS GOTTEN *IN* TO YOU?

ASTROTRAIN, STOP HIM! THIS HAS BECOME AN EMBARRASSING FARCE.

THAT WASN'T USELESS. IT WAS TARGETING AND RANGE INFORMATION.

WHAT IN—?

WHEN A SOLID OBJECT—LIKE A ***SKYWATCH COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE***—DROPS FROM ORBIT ON A STEEP DESCENT, IT CAN REACH SPEEDS IN EXCESS OF MACH 10.

IF AIMED AT A TARGET, MORE ENERGY IS RELEASED ON IMPACT THAN A TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPON.

BALLISTIC THEORISTS CALL THIS A KINETIC HARPOON. THE WORLD'S BIGGEST GUN.

UUHHHH...

I'LL GIVE YOU CREDIT, PRIME. I DID NOT SEE THAT COMING.

AND IT ACTUALLY DID *HURT.*

NO...

...NO!

WHY CAN'T YOU EVER DIE?

PROWL, DO YOU SEE THIS?

IS THAT... NO WAY.

I HAVE BROUGHT OPTIMUS PRIME BACK TO YOU. HE IS ALIVE, AND NEEDS ONLY A LITTLE CARE TO BECOME FULLY FUNCTIONAL AGAIN.

I AM ALSO SURRENDERING MYSELF INTO YOUR CUSTODY.

WHY DID YOU DO THIS, MEGATRON?

I AM EXACTLY WHERE I WANT TO BE, PRIME.

I KNOW YOU *THINK* THAT, BUT YOU'VE MADE A MISTAKE. IF OMEGA SUPREME SENSES YOU ESCAPING, HE'S UNDER ORDERS TO CHANGE INTO ROBOT FORM. WITH YOU INSIDE OF HIM.

YOU'LL BE DISMEMBERED. AT THE VERY LEAST, YOU'LL BE CRUSHED. THIS WILL HAPPEN EVEN IF I'M INSIDE HERE WITH YOU.

AND IF THOSE HUMAN CREATURES YOU LOVE SO MUCH ARE IN HERE TOO?

THEY WON'T BE. THEY'LL BE STAYING IN THE OUTER-FORTRESS. THEY ARE UNDER MY PROTECTION.

HA HA HA! YOU ARE SO *BLIND*, PRIME. DON'T YOU SEE? I'M IN HERE BECAUSE THESE ARE THE BEST SEATS IN THE HOUSE. IF I WAS OUT WANDERING THIS PLANET, I'D MISS THE BIG SHOW.

MY SOLDIERS RAIDED SEVERAL OF THESE HUMAN BASES. WE RECOVERED ALL OF OUR PRISONERS— AND ONE CORPSE. SCRAPPER.

THAT MAN YOU COLLUDE WITH. THE HUMAN SOLDIER. HE KILLED SCRAPPER.

EXECUTED HIM.

THAT'S A SHALLOW GAMBIT, EVEN FOR YOU. I'VE BEEN A PART OF EVERY ONE OF SKYWATCH'S OPERATIONS FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS. I WAS THERE WHEN SCRAPPER'S BODY WAS RECOVERED BY SKYWATCH FORCES.

BUT NOT WHEN HE WAS *KILLED.*

WE SAW HIS LAST RECORDED MEMORIES. YOU ARE COLLABORATING WITH OUR *EXECUTIONERS*, PRIME! YOU ARE A TRAITOR TO YOUR RACE!

I TRUST SPIKE.

THAT'S WHAT MAKES IT SO *DELICIOUS!* THERE ARE UNCOUNTABLE HUMANS OUT THERE AMONG THOSE YOU WOULD PROTECT, ARMED AND READY TO KILL YOU. THERE ARE HUMANS IN HERE, THOSE YOU CALL YOUR *FRIENDS*, WHO ARE EXTERMINATING US.

YOU LEAD YOUR AUTOBOTS TO *OBLIVION*, PRIME. YOUR PHILOSOPHY HAS *FAILED.*

I AM EXACTLY WHERE I WANT TO BE BECAUSE I AM RIGHT, PRIME! I HAVE *ALWAYS BEEN RIGHT!*

IN HINDSIGHT, IT WAS HORRIBLY SHORT-SIGHTED TO PUT YOU AND RATCHET ON THE SAME OPERATION AND LEAVE OUR HOME BASE WITHOUT TRIAGE.

THEREFORE, YOU SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCES IN CASE OF—

PROWL.

I NEED YOU TO INVESTIGATE SOMETHING FOR ME. RECRUIT WHOMEVER YOU NEED, BUT KEEP IT CONTAINED TO JUST THEM.

OF COURSE, PRIME. I'LL GET SPIKE TO SET UP A SPECIFIC LINK TO—

NO.

"SPIKE CAN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS."

MEGATRON'S TAUNTS ECHO DOWN THE HALLWAYS OF OMEGA SUPREME LONG AFTER HE'D BEEN MUZZLED.

—IN AN ATTACK ON A SCHOOL EARLIER THIS WEEK—

—ACTIVIST BEN SIMPSON GAINING SUPPORT IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES NOW—

—PROLIFERATION OF DANGEROUS WEAPONS INCREASING WITH PARANOID SENTIMENTS—

PROMISES OF A WORLD ACCELERATING INTO CHAOS...

...OF THE FAILURE OF HOPE.

TENSIONS BETWEEN COMRADES...

...AND PRIME CHASES THOSE ECHOES THROUGH THE HALLS...

...PAST HIS FALLEN FRIENDS...

...AND UNEASY ALLIES...

...ALONE WITH HIS GHOSTS.

REVENGE OF THE DECEPTICONS
PART 5: THE DEMOLISHED MAN

NEXT MONTH: *SPACE OPERA!*

NEXT ISSUE:

SPACE OPERA

ON SALE NEXT MONTH!